

Summary

Project Purpose and Need

Purpose

The Milan Beltway will provide a connection between the developing area south of the Rock River and the urbanized area north of the river, all in Rock Island County. The project is carefully integrated with the John Deere Expressway which serves a rapidly growing commercial and personal service corridor north of the River. The project substantially reduces the need to widen Blackhawk Road through the historically rich Black Hawk State Historic Site. The proposed interconnection of the Beltway with Airport Road south of the Rock River is a critical element of this project. The interconnection will relieve traffic volumes on Airport Road which is currently experiencing capacity problems.

Need

The Milan Beltway is the planned connecting link between the existing termination point of the Milan Beltway at Airport Road and the John Deere Expressway. The proposed extension would divert a substantial volume of traffic away from Blackhawk Road and the Black Hawk State Historic Site. The project would also provide improved access to the interstate highway system (I-280) for residents of southeast Rock Island and southwest Moline.

Completion of the Beltway would relieve existing and anticipated traffic pressure on several heavily-traveled roadways in the vicinity of the project. These roadways include Blackhawk and Airport Roads.

Affected Environment

The Rock River is the key feature in the project area. It is used for recreation and provides a useful resource. The river floods both winter and summer on a periodic basis. The valley is rich

in cultural resources. It also provides terrestrial and aquatic habitat for a variety of fish and wildlife.

The area is rapidly developing, as vacant and agricultural lands are converted to urban uses. Most of the area is served by public and private utilities, making development relatively easy. Much of Moline's and Rock Island's recent growth has occurred in the Rock River valley.

Alternatives

The Milan Beltway Extension project has fixed beginning and ending points. The project must connect to the existing beltway at Airport Road and with Blackhawk Road/John Deere Expressway north of the river. Slightly different "build" alternatives were examined and the one creating the least environmental disruption emerged as "preferred".

A number of build alternatives were considered including alternate river crossings, a toll facility, at grade intersections, and a series of transportation system management alternatives. Within the preferred alternative, a series of studies were conducted regarding interchanges, the Rock River Bridge, and the crossing of an existing borrow area.

The preferred alternative is a four-lane, access-controlled expressway connecting the Milan Beltway (at its present terminus at Airport Road) to the Blackhawk Road/John Deere Expressway. Current estimated cost for the project is \$46.2 million.

Environmental Consequences

Section 4 of this document discusses project environmental consequences in great detail. Significant impacts are highlighted below:

- Displacement of five residences and eleven businesses
- Spurred commercial development
- Loss of between 0.05 and 0.19 percent of assessed valuation of property in the three townships affected by the project
- Improved access for emergency vehicles
- Displacement of approximately 68 employees
- Possible creation of 500-700 construction related jobs
- Permanently impact 9.0 hectares (22.3 acres) of wetlands
- Temporarily impact 1.4 hectares (3.5 acres) of wetlands
- Approximately 47.1 hectares (116.5 acres) of land converted to right-of-way
- Approximately 22.9 hectares (56.7 acres) of farmland converted to highway right-of-way
- Impacts on wildlife including:
 - Loss of habitat
 - Habitat conversion
 - Movement impairment

- Collision mortality
- Fragmentation of habitat
- Approximately 10.8 hectares (26.7 acres) of Rock River floodplain will be devoted to project right-of-way
- Reduced energy consumption
- Temporary construction-related impacts regarding noise, air quality, access, and utility services
- Reduction in the rate of traffic increase on Blackhawk Road through the Black Hawk State Historic Site
- Bridge design minimizes potential for ice jams and flooding of upstream residents
- A number of state and federal permits will be required for the proposed project

Technical Reports

This final Environmental Impact Statement summarizes a series of technical reports for the Milan Beltway Extension. These reports include cultural resources inventories, mussel and fish surveys, wetland surveys, ecological resource studies, and site investigations. These reports are available for public review at the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) offices in Dixon and Springfield.

A combined report-design study has been prepared and includes the engineering and geometric details for the various project alternatives. A hydraulic report for the proposed bridge crossing has also been completed. These documents are also available for public review at IDOT offices in Dixon and Springfield.

Several reports by the Bi-State Regional Commission provided valuable data for this document. These reports include the 1997 Congestion Management Plan for the Quad Cities and various transportation plans for the urbanized area.